

Fort Hunter Liggett Special Resource Study

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Thanks for Your Comments

Many thanks to those of you who reviewed and commented on the Draft Fort Hunter Liggett Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment, and those who participated in our public meetings. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing your ideas and concerns. A summary of comments received to date is included in this newsletter. Your input and opinions are an important part of the special resource study process, and we appreciate the time you have invested.

The draft study report was published in early June, followed by a comment period, which initially closed on August 6, 2004. Two public meetings were held to provide opportunities for submitting comments and for asking questions about the draft study report. The meetings were held in King City on July 7 and in Salinas on July 10. These meetings were attended by a total of about 50 individuals representing local communities, tribes, organizations, and agencies. A total of 20 written comment letters, e-mails, and forms were also received during the initial comment period.

Public Comment Period Extended

The public comment period on the Draft Fort Hunter Liggett Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment has been extended to address concerns that key stakeholders did not have adequate input into the study process. **The comment period will now extend until October 31, 2004.**

We particularly welcome new comments from people and organizations who have not yet provided comments. However, new topics or comments from people and organizations who have already provided comments are also welcome. All comments previously received are a part of the public record for this project, and do not need to be re-submitted.

Comments can be e-mailed to: PGSO_FHL@nps.gov
Or mailed to: National Park Service, Park Planning and Environmental Compliance, 1111 Jackson St. #700, Oakland, CA 94607

Additional copies of the report are available by contacting us at the same addresses. The report is also posted on the internet at www.nps.gov/pwro/fhl. A brief summary of the report's findings is also at the same internet address.

News Updates

The following updates highlight recent developments which could impact the future management of excess property at Fort Hunter Liggett:

- A Senate amendment in the Military Construction Appropriations Act (S.2674) addresses the transfer of future excess property at Fort Hunter Liggett, offering the US Forest Service the right of first refusal to accept any land at fort Hunter Liggett that is determined to be excess to military needs. View the amendment language by searching for **S.2674** at: <http://thomas.loc.gov> (this language is in section 129 of the bill).
- California State Parks' comments on the draft Fort Hunter Liggett Special Resource Study indicate that they seek a broader future partnership with the NPS in management of the Milpitas Hacienda or other Fort Hunter Liggett resources. A brief summary of all comments received to date is provided in this newsletter.

Next Steps

DATE	ACTION
Summer/Fall 2004	Public comment period ending on October 31, 2004. Public comment analysis and summary.
Fall/Winter 2004	Draft study is revised to address agency concerns and public comments. Final report transmitted to the NPS Director. Review by NPS Director, U.S. Army, and Office of Management and Budget. Secretary of the Interior submits final report to Congress with a recommendation for proposed action.



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Summary of Public Comments on the Draft Study Report

Below is a brief summary of the major comments received regarding the draft Fort Hunter Liggett Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment published in June, 2004. This summary includes comments raised at public meetings and comment forms and letters sent via e-mail or regular mail. As described earlier, additional comments are welcome until October 31, 2004.

- Agreement that the Fort Hunter Liggett study area contains resources worthy of inclusion in the national or state park systems.
- The finding that NPS management is infeasible is short-sighted and based on limitations that may change over time. Study should recommend inclusion of Fort Hunter Liggett lands in the national park system in the future if declared surplus to military needs, subject to NPS financial ability at the time of transfer.
- Alternatives should have addressed the entire Fort Hunter Liggett study area, not just the excess structures; NPS should have sought a relationship with Fort Hunter Liggett in managing cultural and natural resources.
- Important to protect Fort Hunter Liggett lands in perpetuity for its resource-based recreation opportunities and as the cultural landscape of the Mission San Antonio de Padua.
- Disappointment/puzzlement as to why management of possible future excess property at Fort Hunter Liggett is feasible for the US Forest Service but not for the NPS.
- California State Parks will decline any interest in managing the Milpitas Hacienda and other excess structures if there is no potential for a long term land management partnership with NPS.
- Concern that increased visitation to the Fort Hunter Liggett area would result in negative impacts to irreplaceable Salinan cultural sites.
- Salinan Native Americans would like to be more involved in any decisions that relate to the transfer or management of land at Fort Hunter Liggett.
- Various suggestions for transfer of property to Monterey County, Salinans, or non-profits. Monterey County is interested in obtaining the Hacienda complex, if transfer to California State Parks does not occur.
- Various suggestions regarding public access, roads, hunting, resource rarity, and analysis of cumulative impacts.
- Various questions regarding feasibility and capability of agencies to manage the excess property.

These and any additional comments received during the extended public comment period will be addressed in a future newsletter or report.